

17. (Amended) A system for providing information to a user comprising:

a first computer system adapted to collect information and organize said information into

a plurality of first web-sites, each of said first web-sites being addressable by a Universal

Resource Locator (URL) and having a physical location associated therewith, said first computer

system further adapted to [provide] assign one of said first web-sites to a user as a user web-site

and present links to a plurality of said first web-sites on said user web-site based on a relationship

between the physical locations associated with said first web-sites and the physical location

associated with said user web-site.

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 remain in this application. Claims 1, 16 and 17 have been amended.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-9, 16-18, 26 [sic, 25?] and ~~33-35~~ were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over PCT Patent No. WO 98/04088 to Bonnaure et al. ("Bonnaure") and "A Proposal for a Geographic-Based Address Structure for IPv6" to Ye ("Ye"). Claims 10, 11, 13-15, 19-10, 22-24, 26-27-27, 29-32, and 36-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonnaure, Ye and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,032,989 to Tornetta ("Tornetta"). Claims 12, 21, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonnaure, Ye and Tornetta and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,944,787 to Zoken. These rejections are traversed, in part, because the cited references fail to teach or suggest the methods and systems for providing local information over a network as recited in the claims.

The presently claimed invention pertains to a method and system for providing local information to a user over a network such as the Internet. For example, in the method recited in claim 1, information is collected at a first computer system (e.g., a server) and organized into a plurality of web-sites. Each of the web-sites (1) is addressable by a unique URL and (2) has a physical location associated with it. A user has assigned to him/her a web-site (i.e., a user web-site). Then, links to a subset of the remaining web-sites are selected based on a relationship between the physical locations associated with these remaining web-sites and the user web-site. As an example, a user located in San Francisco may be assigned a user web-site that has associated with it a URL and the San Francisco location. The URL, however, points to a computer system such as a server that could be anywhere (e.g., Nebraska). A variety of other web-sites are collected at the server. In this case, some of the web-sites have a location associated with it that are in San Francisco while others are associated with New York and Washington locations. Thus, when "selecting" from these web-sites, a comparison can be made between the location associated with the user web-site with the locations associated with the remaining web-sites. In such a manner, those web-sites for New York and Washington locations can be filtered out (e.g., as irrelevant) to a user located in San Francisco having assigned to it a user web-site with an associated URL and San Francisco location.

X Bonnaure refers to the so-called Web-TV service. In this service, each client has a set-top box that is able to access the Internet (e.g., through a standard phone line) and present information from the Internet on the attached television set. The set-top box also accepts control inputs from the user. Bonnaure, at page 18 discloses that a client network address is provided that is linked to the set-top box of the user. The client network address can be associated with the geographical location of the set-top box. The geographical information is gleaned from

information from the user's telephone number (i.e., through the area code and exchange).

Though Ye has a 1998 date associated with it, it should not be considered prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) because it was not published more than one year before the Applicants' filing date of November 18, 1999. Applicants have asked the library staff at Dalhousie University when the Ye reference was published at the DalTech Library. At this point it appears that it was published in April, 1999. In discussing the Ye reference, Applicants are making no admissions that it has a publication date that precedes their invention date.

provide evidence please

Ye concerns a geographic-based scheme for IP addresses. As known in the art, routers in the Internet system maintain data on IP addresses so that data intended for a particular IP address can be "routed" to another, appropriate router or other destination. To reduce the amount of data needed, Ye suggests that IP addresses reflect a geographic location. When a router receives data with such an IP address it would then compare the address to its own location to determine whether the data should be re-directed to a router location North, South, East or West of the current router, etc. Thus, the amount of data needed at each router is significantly reduced.

Looking at claim 1, for example, there are several steps that are neither taught nor suggested by Bonnaure and Ye, taken singularly or in combination. First, the claim recites the organization of information into a plurality of web-sites, where each web site is addressable by a URL and has a physical location associated with it. This feature is not even remotely discussed in the Bonnaure or Ye references. In Bonnaure, the set-top box has a client network address that is associated with a physical location. In Ye, the IP address (not a web-site or URL as stated in the Office Action) has a physical location encoded in the address itself. Thus, neither of these references refer to a web-site as recited in the claim. It should be noted that multiple URLs may map to a single IP address. In the present invention, several different locations may be associated

with a single IP address because each web-site is associated with its own URL and physical location. For example, an IP address may point to a server located in Nebraska, but several URLs may be associated with the same server even though, according to an embodiment of the present invention, the locations associated with each URL may be outside of Nebraska.

Second, the providing step has been amended by changing the word “providing” to “assigning” to remove any ambiguity in this claim term (Claims 16 and 17 have been similarly amended). In this step a web-site is assigned to a user. In no fashion is this feature taught or described in Bonnaure and/or Ye. In Bonnaure, the only assignment is the client network address, which corresponds to the user’s set-top box. Though web-sites may be accessed by a user in the Bonnaure and Ye systems, neither teaches assigning a web-site to a user as recited in claim.

Third, the selecting step refers to selecting links to a plurality of web-sites based on the relationship between physical locations associated with the user’s web-site and remaining web-sites. Again, this feature is not found in Bonnaure and/or Ye. The Office Action points to page 20, lines 17-23 of Ye as disclosing this feature. As discussed above, the concepts described in Ye deals with routing data based on geographically-encoded IP addresses. There is no selection from a plurality of web-sites discussed at all in Ye. Based on the foregoing, claim 1 is allowable in view of the Bonnaure and Ye references. Since independent claims 16 and 17 also include these limitations, these claims are also allowable in view of these references.

Claim 25 refers to a method where information is provided to a user from a merchant if the physical location associated with the merchant web-site is within a local area. The Office Action states that Bonnaure discloses this feature at Page 19, para.2, lines 5-9 and page 22, para. 2. The cited sections, however, do not pertain to the claimed features. On page 19, Bonnaure

describes a WebTV system where a user requests a business transaction and the WebTV server selects a delivery station geographically close to the client. On page 22, Bonnaure further describes the WebTV system, where a user sends the geographic information for his/her set-top box to third-party so that it can optimize the transaction with the user. As stated above, Bonnaure fails to describe associating a web-site with a physical location, a feature recited in claim 25. Accordingly, claim 25 is allowable in view of the cited references. Since claims 2-15, 18-24, and 26-43 depend from and further define independent claims 1, 17, and 25, these claims are also allowable.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there are several features in the dependent claims that are not taught or suggested by Bonnaure, Ye, or the additional Tornetta and Zoken references. For example in claim 6, the physical location of the user web-site can be modified by a user at a second time. In Bonnaure, the physical location of the set-top box is what is stored as geographic information for a user. In Ye, a GPS system is not used to reassociate a physical location with an IP address. Instead, once a device is placed (e.g., in an office), a GPS system may be used to figure out the server's location so that the appropriate IP address can be formulated (a concept remote from the presently claimed invention). Claim 15 refers to selecting a geographic "local area" for a user web-site where the local area is a circle that includes a threshold number of telephone connections. None of the references, including Tornetta, discusses this feature. The recited section in Bonnaure merely talks of how a telephone number reveals location information. Claim 12 refers to selecting a geographic local area for a user web-site where the local area is a zip code area includes the user's web-site physical location. None of the references, including Zoken, describe this feature. The recited section in Zoken refers to determining a zip code from an E-mail message (not an E-mail address) that may include addressing information in the

message (a concept remote from the presently claimed invention).

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (408) 975-7500 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: 1/4/01

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